

## EDITORIAL: Promises Kept

By JEFF FARR

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It's that time of year again: The End.

October, November, December — The End of 1998. It's time again to assess how far we've come both with our personal and organizational goals from New Year's; we have just three months left to finish things up.

And whether we're satisfied or dissatisfied with where we're at, three months is plenty of time to do something great. It's certainly not over yet!

At a telephone conference with region leaders on Sept. 13 (see p. 5), General Director Zaitu shared how SGI President Ikeda is encouraging all SGI leaders that to achieve the great goals our organization has, each of them has to change first — each leader has to take action first. For instance, President Ikeda is emphasizing that all leaders should be on the front lines of the organization, in the districts and in one-on-one meetings with members.

In the same way, when we change, when we do human revolution, we move closer to fulfilling whatever dreams we have. As Buddhism teaches, "If you want to see what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 172). Our focus should be on what kinds of changes *we* can make right now.

Hank Aaron says that the secret to hitting home runs is focusing on the ball to the point where "it looks as big as a grapefruit" — the grapefruit in a home-run life is keeping our focus on the human revolution that we're doing today.

Then, our dreams *have* to come true.

But sometimes our dreams, especially the bigger ones, can feel burdening. There may even be times when we feel a certain resentment about our determinations being difficult to realize. We have to remember that we chose these determinations of our own free will. Why not appreciate the determinations that make us struggle most? These are exactly what allow us to grow the most, to change the most. When we consider setting a big dream aside, we have to ask ourselves if we're setting our growth, our human revolution, aside, too.

In Buddhism, to set a determination means to commit yourself to an eventual victory — it is, in the end, to make a promise. On the one hand, it may be a promise to people important to you: your parents, your partner, your best friend, your children, your district members, whomever. But it's also always a promise to yourself.

You are, after all, the only one who ever really knows how much you've kept the promise or not. As President Ikeda says: "It doesn't matter how others judge you. When all is said and done, you are your own judge."

The SGI president is a great example of someone who keeps his promises. The promises he made to his mentor, the promises he made to the SGI members — he has, in a sense, paid these in full. He has won in his personal life and his activities for kosen-rufu. He has been true to himself; he promised himself to win in everything, and he has.

One lesson to take from this is that it's one thing to call yourself a disciple, and another to say that you've won as a disciple. In the same way, it's one thing to say that you've lived and another to say that you've won in life.

As we assess what promises we've kept and what ones we haven't (yet) this year, let's keep this in mind: There's a big difference between a promise made and a promise kept, and that difference is us — that difference is the changes we can make now.

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